DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 107 277 IR 002 021

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TITLE	Information Service.
INSTITUTION	American Newspaper Publishers Association Foundation, Washington, D.C.
PUB DATE	Jun 73
NOTE	20p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Special Library Association (Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, June 10-14, 1973)
EDRS PRICE	MF-$0.76 HC-$1.58 PLUS POSTAGE
DESCRIPTORS	Conference Reports; Fees; *Information Services; Information Sources; Libraries; Library Reference Services; *Newspapers; Police; *Special Libraries
IDENTIFIERS	FBI; Federal Bureau of Investigation; Internal Revenue Service; IRS; *Public Access

ABSTRACT

Newspaper librarians discussed the public use of their newspapers' libraries. Policies run the gamut from well-staffed public information services, within or outside the newspaper library, to no service at all to those outside the staff of the paper. Problems of dealing with tax and law enforcement agencies were covered, as well as cooperative programs, copy charges, annual fees to outside organizations, and other charges. (LS)

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ED107277

MASTER COPY
19 pgs.

Information Service

by

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St. Petersburg (Fla.) Times and Independent

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My feeling, and that of many of us, is that the best possible service to your news staff is the objective of the news library. The best possible service so they can produce the best possible newspaper. Our paper and our library serve best the entire reading public instead of the relatively few who ask questions and tie up the phone lines. Perhaps this has been best expressed by Joseph Pulitzer who said, "Every newspaper is a public trust; my library is not a public library." Of course, I understand the St. Louis (Mo.) Post-Dispatch violates that rule consistently. However, the library cannot serve two masters, either it's going to serve its news staff or it's going to serve the general public, unless top management provides an adequate library staff and the money to properly handle both.

For example, even if you do answer the questions of the general public, you'll soon find out that it's best not to answer them at all in many instances. Incomplete or inadequate answers can backfire, cause ill will and ruin the great image you're supposed to extend to the public. You also have the problem that there sometimes is no correct answer. If the person on the other end thinks you're wrong, he'll let you know. For example, some drunk will call up and ask, "Was Joe Louis the champ when Max Schmeling defeated him?" (This is boxing for those of you who are too young to know.) Joe Louis eventually became world heavyweight champion; but of course the answer is that he was not champion at the time that Schmeling defeated him. So when the drunk calls up, you tell him that Louis was not the champion. He then puts his buddy on the line and what you do is tell the other guy that yes, he was the champion. That way they kill each other and you have two less people for whom you have to answer questions.

Now there are several approaches to public information. You can do it like many papers do -- "sort of" -- which I'm afraid to say is too often the case. One way is to have an adequate staff to handle the calls and another method is to have a separate department to handle the calls. Which reminds me of the time one of my girls got a call and she was asked, "Is this the query department?" She answered by saying, "I beg your pardon?"

I also have the feeling that librarians of small newspaper libraries must take the position with management that unless the staff and the budget are forthcoming that they will not do public service. If they continue to do public service at the expense of the efficiency of their operation they are really only fooling themselves. At the end of the year when the clippings and the pictures are piled up, nobody's going to ask them, "How many questions did you answer? How many drunks did you satisfy? How many graduates did you get through? How many parents did you save the trouble of taking their child to the public library?" All they're going to say is, "You're way behind buddy. Why?"

Rex Schaeffer touched on the subject of professionalism. I think that part of our professionalism has to be this ability to stand up to management and tell them the truth about these things. Frank Lloyd Wright once said that, "Honest arrogance is better than hypocritical humility." I

think that we have to be honestly arrogant. We do a good job, we're going to do what is needed by the newspaper and that job is to make it a better newspaper.

I'd like to ask a question. How many of you handle public service in your libraries? How many of you have a separate department that does it for you? The trend is increasingly toward a separate department and I'd like to have a few people here who I know have either one or the other of these operations explain to us how they handle the situation. Then those of you who "sort of" have a library service can learn how others do it and can go back and convince everybody of the right way. Joe McCarthy of the New York (N.Y.) Daily News has a separate department handling his queries. Joe would you briefly describe your setup.

JOE MCCARTHY:

In a city like New York with eight million people if you are going to use the editorial department to take care of the public, you need a much bigger staff. Therefore the News (as long ago as in the 20's) started what they called a Readers Service Bureau and any one of the public can call there to ask a legitimate question and they'll get an answer. That department of the Daily News is bigger than the Editorial Library. They have a staff of fifty. They handle an average of 3,000 calls a day. They serve people coming in, calling on the phone or writing letters. They take care of everybody. I know fifty sounds like a lot of people but they also do other things. They sell books and back numbers of papers. They have a travel bureau where you can come in, if you want to get yourself routed from New York to Boston, they'll show you how to go from one place to another without going off the road. They do many things like that.

The Readers Service Bureau has no library of its own and they are the only ones permitted in the Editorial Library. They have four information clerks in the Readers Service Bureau that are permitted to use the Daily News Editorial Library. They are the only ones; no other staff members are allowed in our library. If they get a call on the phone or a letter wanting some bit of information, they will come up to the library. They are now on a different floor which makes it kind of difficult (they used to be on the same one). They come up and are permitted to go through our files to get the needed information. They also have a separate microfilm room so if someone comes in and wants to look at the Daily News on microfilm they can do it there. It is an entirely separate operation from the editorial department. It comes under the promotion department or public relations section of the paper.

JIM SCOFIELD:

Clem Vitek from the Baltimore (Md.)Sun, do you still handle public service in the library?

CLEM VITEK:

I have a separate department for names and information that's not anything as elaborate as Joe described. From what I understand, over the years, there aren't too many of those kinds of operations. My Information Bureau started about fifty years ago in 1923. It was basically a promotion at that time to assist the public. Then eventually it changed. At that time there was also a question and answer column in the paper and some way or other, it became more and more part of the library operation. Many of you saw the movie I showed last Sunday and you could see the Information Bureau I have. It's actually within the precincts of the library. We have two people who devote their time to the public's information calls. Although they work forty hours a week, the Information Bureau doesn't open to the public until 9 o'clock in the morning. They work from 9-5 Monday through Friday. We used to work Saturdays too but we stopped that quite some time ago. We will attempt to answer any kind of question anybody asks. I want to underline attempt. I feel that many times we do quite well merely by pointing people to the right source. We don't have to tell them the answer and we don't have the money or the time to look it up.

Now the Bureau is open via telephone, walk in, the U.S. Mail or any other method of communication. We do try to answer letters. We average anywhere between 80-100 calls a day (and you can always be sure of somebody jotting down something on every call that comes in) and probably 15-16 letters. We're only talking about two people, so to cover the particular problem, that Jim brought up, I will mention cost. If you want to run a bureau like that, remember if one of those people are ill, then you've got to draw on your regular library staff to fill in, which does shortchange you another way. The public, however, in most instances is grateful. I won't say there aren't people who won't argue with you and ruin everything. I've also found in some instances -- for some real reason -- that we refused to do some work for people. We quite often find that somebody on the staff of one of our papers was coming in for that very kind of thing, to do research for somebody, so they're getting it out of your library anyway. It's a sneaky way to do it, but it does happen.

The other thing that I've run into (in a lot of libraries) is that they're answering public information calls anyway, and a lot of them don't even know it. Occasionally people have a public information service of some kind and close it down, but the calls are still put right into the library. I would much rather have at least some telephones, and some communications and some lines completely separate, so that people can come in there because at least I can raise hell with our telephone operators and say, "Stop throwing the public calls into the library. We won't answer them so make sure that they get on the right line!"

JIM SCOFIELD:

John Beegan of the Hartford (Conn.) Chronicle, what does your library do in the way of public information service?

JOHN BEEGAN:

We do very little. We discourage handling outside calls. Students for example, we refer to the public library or to the school library. That's about it.

JIM SCOFIELD:

Josephine Johnson of the Louisville (Ky.) Courier Journal, what do you do?

JOSEPHINE JOHNSON:

Our closing to the public is of very recent vintage. We were in a position where we were always on the line giving public service and of course the library was doing it too. I found the most effective way to convince management that we should come out of the blue sky is to point out what you're losing. So in 1965 I made the proposal to management to close the public information service completely. We didn't make a public statement because if you do that you're really in trouble. When I or any of the library staff would tell the caller that we didn't perform this service anymore they would go tearing off to Mr. Bingham, Mr. Isaacs or Mr. Baker. So management decided that since we were the news library, Mr. Isaacs would be the front line defender of the faith. So when Mr. Bingham would get a problem he'd turn to Isaacs, and when Mr. Baker would get a problem, he'd also turn to Isaacs. Isaacs was a very tough gentleman, in a very quiet way.

I was in his office one time when the head of the Internal Revenue Service called up (he had been a former employee of the Courier) and Norman Isaacs tipped me the wink about who he was talking to. He said, "Now listen politely, and agree with everything." The man said, "Now Norman, you understand why I have to use the library, so tell the librarian to let me in." Norman said, "Sorry, no way." So we didn't have any trouble then, but we did have trouble later with the FBI, and this was really funny.

The only time we ever violated our own rule was when a Judgeship was coming up and Mr. Bingham asked me personally if the FBI could come up and screen the clippings. We let them do it; they paid $50.00 for xeroxing copies and the man who was doing the research told me that he thought it was about time that we had got an attack of brains about handling our library. This from the FBI no less!

We do have counter files for one full year, and anybody can come in and look at those papers. Well shortly thereafter, an FBI man came in and was looking through the counter files. He was talking to one of the staff members he knew and he happened to mention what he was looking for, which was some data on two men who were also up for consideration for the judgeship. Our reporters had been standing on their heads trying to find out who our senators in Washington were going to sponsor for this position. One of the reporters happened to be in the library and this way he scooped the FBI. Now the FBI says, "Please we don't want to use your files!" So that's one of the things that happened.

The thing to do is be able to document your reasons for doing something. Everybody's busy, especially your publisher. They're not about to sit down and discuss how nice it i if you don't get the wor done because you're dealing with the public. However, they are willing to listen to why you think something drastic has to be done because you have lost material. We're still losing things but now we know it's a staff oriented problem. It doesn't give you much more control, but it does give you a little.

I think too, as Jim said in his early remarks, that to give inadequate answers to people or inadequate service is more damaging to your public image than to give no serivce at all. We have a very good rapport with the public library and we have a good public service library available. We keep our newspapers on microfilm in the public library just for that purpose. All in all it has worked out. You can get the aggravated citizen once in a while but this has boiled down quite a bit to the kind of personality that's aggravated about everything anyway. The reasonable man will take your reasonable reasons. The public service staff does the work, makes the copies if the person wants it (a reasonable number). Of course all of it depends on the efficiency of the staff of the public service department. We have had good rapport with the present staff and everything's plodding along in good shape.

JIM SCOFIELD:

George Collins of the Boston (Mass.) Globe, would you say a word?

GEORGE COLLINS:

Jim asked me if I'd say something about a couple of things that I've done since I started at the Globe library. One of the first things I did probably irritated some people (but I haven't heard about it yet). I listened for a week or two to the phones ring from 6:30 in the morning to 11:30 at night and then I shut them off for a month as an experiment. I'd only take calls from 3-5 P.M. and also from 7-8 P.M. So far we haven't gotten a complaint. All the drunks call up and if it isn't 3-5 P.M., they have to call the Boston (Mass.) Herald American. So we slowed them down a little. The serious ones call back. They ask a serious question and we give the the answer. We have a policy of not answering drunks, bets or homework questions.

We have a couple of other things in mind though. Boston, as you know, has some history, so two years from now they're planning a rather large event. I'd like to share what we're going to do because we're going to have a little fun with it for a couple years. We don't know if it's going to work or not, but this is one of our ideas for the library.

We have a downtown office which is in the Old Corner Bookstore (the original building which has been restored by the Boston Historical Society and the Globe). In that building we have several offices upstairs which we rent, or don't rent, depending upon how many people want to be in that neighborhood. It's at the heart of the Freedom Trail of Boston. Two years from now when hundreds of thousands of people visit Boston during the Centennial, we expect to have hundreds of thousands of people who'll pass that building and a lot of them are going to come in because in that building we have all (or almost all) of the first editions that were

published in the Old Corner Bookstore. The staff of the Globe at one time or another has purchased almost all of them, put them on shelves and identified them. We have purchased for the Globe, and given to the Globe, the desks, the pens, and the artifacts of people like Ralph Waldo Emerson, Lowell and Longfellow, and others of the people who had books published at the Old Corner Bookstore.

At present, that office is a place where you can buy a copy of the Globe or place a classified ad. We have this office because, as you know, we are five miles out of the city and we had to have a messenger desk where our messengers could go to pick up the display ad copies. Our thought, and management seems to be going along with it, is that we'll move the messenger desk out of sight, upstairs. We'll take over one or two of the offices on the second floor and the downstairs library section of the Old Corner Bookstore. This will be our downtown library branch. We'll hook it up with transcribers and telephones on a direct line into the Globe library. If they'll give me the staff, they're apparently leaning toward two or three people, we'll have a downtown office that can answer, or try to answer, any question the public wants to ask the Globe. We'll advertise it as such. Now we won't even attempt it if they won't give us the staff. We're either going to go for the whole ball of wax, or we're not going to do any of this. We told them this right from the start. This has been brooded about since about three weeks after I took over the library, and it's beginning to get into gear. We're going to have to do some changing structurally. If it works it will be an interesting thing.

The day I arrived in the Globe library, I was informed, that nobody could find the Ralph Lowell clips. In Boston, the Lowells talk only to the Cabots and maybe to God if she's home. Anyway, they told me that the Ralph Lowell clips weren't in the file. Ralph Lowell is "Mr. Boston." At one time or another he's been on more boards of directors (ninety-two boards) than any other human in America. He is a director of the Globe, he's a Harvard overseer, he's everything and he's also dying. Well, they couldn't find the clips and they couldn't find the obituary. This was my first baptism, find the Ralph Lowell clips! So I put up a hearty notice on the bulletin board. "Anybody knowing the whereabouts of the Ralph Lowell clips, please return them to the library!" and signed it very politely. About a week went by and they didn't show.

In the meantime I found out that the president of the Boston Consolidated Gas Co., Eli Goldstein, clips were missing too. Goldstein's wife was dying too. Mrs. Goldstein's clips were there and the obituary was there, newly prepared. There was a card in both these files saying who had taken these clips out; but when I went to these people they both said they brought them back. Well, you don't accuse them or go around saying that they're liars and what have you. As a matter of fact, I believed one of the guys. The guy who had the Ralph Lowell clips. I really believed him. He only had them for the time of one edition, when they got the flash that Ralph Lowell was going to croak, and then he brought them back at the end of the edition.

Therefore when the Goldstein clips didn't show up I went to the city editor, who was in charge of the party who did the Mrs. Goldstein obituary. One young reporter was on a vacation and he said, "Well look, she may have the clips in her desk drawer, but she's been very nervous recently as we've had her under the gun a little bit, so please don't call her while she's on vacation. If Mrs. Goldstein dies or if you really need the Goldstein clips; we'll break open the desk." (All our desks have a lever so you can get in if you need to. Only a few of us know where it is, but they all have a lever.) So I said, "Ok, we'll sweat it out." A week later she came back and I walked over to her and said, "Did you by chance use the Eli Goldstein clips while you were doing the obituary?" She said, "Yes." I said, "Did you bring them back to the library?" She said, "Certainly, certainly." Well she once worked for me on another staff I had and I know her temperament so I said, "Ok, fine." She then said, "The trouble is in your library." I said, "What do you mean it's in the library?" She said, "In the filing system." "Ok, fine," I said and I walked away from her.

Two days later, one of the library clerks came up to me and said, "Hey George, here are the Eli Goldstein clips." I said, "Who brought them back?" She said, "I don't know, I just found them over between Iran and Iraq in the subject files." (Two whole rows of Lektrievers away.) I said, "Ok, was that file loose?" She said, "Yes, that was the third drawer in a tray and the first two drawers were jammed solid." What the reporter had done was come back in through the back door, found a tray where she could cram the stuff in, crammed it in and walked away. So I went back, smiled and said, "You'll be glad to know that we found the Goldstein clips." She said, "I told you, I told you they were in your files." I said, "They certainly were." So it dawned on me maybe that's where the Ralph Lowell clips are -- in the file. Certainly not where they should be because we looked under: Lowell, Lowell Institute, City of Lowell, Mayor Ralph Lowell, Lowell of Summerville and every place of which we could think. I went to my immediate superior and I said, "This is what I think happened, now can I have some extra help on overtime for a couple of weekends (this is how naive I was) to skim through the electriever,and see if we can find the missing files. We'll start at the back end." He said, "Yeah, we have to have them."

By this time the publisher had heard that his director's clips were missing and beside my note on the bulletin board was a note from the publisher. This really scared the hell out of everybody. They had never seen a note from the publisher about a clip. I was watching all the magazines and all the underground papers waiting for this lifetime story of Ralph Lowell to come out (because that's obviously what it's been taken for, a private deal).

We started going through the files. They authorized three people on overtime for two weekends. Then the overtime bill began to frighten them and they said, "George, can you get the people to work on straight time?" Well, I happen to be, among other things, president of the labor union and I can't get the regulars to work on straight time. They won't in the first place and I can't offer it to them in the second place. That's the

trap you're in. I can work my part timers for an extra day.

We've been working 3-4 people every weekend for the past five weekends. We've gone through 5 electrievers and we've got 9 to go. We haven't found Ralph Lowell yet. We've found everything else though. I've instructed them, as you go through, pull everything that's misfiled and put it aside. We'll refile it correctly during the week. If they find Ralph Lowell, (if any of you calls my publisher or my boss and tells this fact, I'll hate you) they understand they're not to tell anyone. If we're lucky, by Labor Day we'll have gone through all the Lektrievers and we may find Ralph Lowell. If we don't, I know his wife has a scrapbook full of clippings.

JIM SCOFIELD:

June Loy of the Chicago (Ill.) Sun Times, what does your library do?

JUNE LOY:

We don't want to do public service but that doesn't mean that we don't do it. We used to have a public service program where they could call into the library and their questions would be answered. The Chicago (Ill.) Tribune used to do this also. It was stopped before my time. I think it was because Chicago is a big city and most of the people don't know how to use the public library. They thought we were it. One of our old ladies, I think a school teacher, assigned a group of students the job of finding out who won the Nobel Peace Prize or one of the Nobel Prizes for a year when it wasn't given. Every kid, every kid's parents or their grandparents were calling up.

What we do now is that the switchboard is instructed not to put any calls to the library unless they are personal calls. The public is not to go through. They do all the time and I don't know what's happening. Of course we get calls transfered to the library by the City Desk, etc. The public can actually get through and talk ot the managing editor about the information they want. Marsnall Field's secretary called me one day and said, "There's a little boy on the phone who really wants to know this." So, you end up doing something for him.

I think we're going to have to try and talk a lot of our people into realizing that we just don't have time to do that kind of stuff. We try and be as courteous as we can. We tell them to use their public library if they can.

JIM SCOFIELD:

Ruth Braun of the Detroit (Mich.) News, what does your library do?

RUTH BRAUN:

I might begin by saying that this has been a long growing service and so we had a great backlog of information on ready reference. Therefor it means that we don't have as much inhouse research to do at the moment the call comes in. There are five people on the staff. One person handles the questions by mail and we found that a large number of our questions came from outside the state of Michigan.

Last year, for our annual report we studied the public relations effect (this is indirectly a public relations aspect of the company) as well as the effect on the library. Actually, I believe that we'll be cutting back on this service somewhat because our metropolitan area now has a similar service which will be developed in great depth at the public library. It's called Total Information Program -- TIP. It's a program which is inviting four cities in the U.S. (on a foundation grant) to give this kind of service regarding agencies and events. Certainly this will lighten up our load a little bit.

We didn't keep statistics every day (we just can't manage that volume of count). We took statistics four weeks of each year, on sample even weeks. We find that we have been answering in excess of a hundred thousand questions each year.

We limit our library to the use of people coming into the library. We have a library register and any person who is permitted to come in for research must make an appointment in advance. The material is prepared before the person arrives so that we have a minimum amount of time that the person is actually within the room.

One wants to use the resources that one has, but you simply must have the staff to do it. We are hard pressed to do this service with five people and we will undoubtedly be cutting back in the extent to which the service is available. Mark Han

JIM SCOFIELD:

Mark Hannan of the Washington (D.C.) Post, how do you handle this?

MARK HANNAN:

We have just one phone and it's open from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m., five days a week. Most of the questions deal with articles that ran in the paper which makes it very difficult and very time consuming. We had a tap put on it last year (for one week) and there were 1,500 people that used it during that week. One person is tremendously inadequate, and management will not pay for more than one so we have a problem.

JIM SCOFIELD:

I just want to make one comment. Isn't it funny that the Washington Post tars it's own phones? In regard to the New York Times, do you have any comments?

LINDA AMSTER:

I have a research section. We seem to get calls now that the Times Information Bureau has been closed. Often they seem to channel more calls to my section, which is really only supposed to be working for people in the building. We get letters and so on. It's rather a problem. Often we just refuse to do them and work only for the staff. It is a problem, because you want to accommodate the public and yet we are a limited staff.

I think they hope that when the information service is fully operational to be able to answer questions that way.

JOE MCCARTHY:

I just want to add, that since the New York Times closed their bureau to calls I understand that ours at the News has increased its work. When I mentioned 3,000 calls a day, part of those used to go to the Times. If you want to know why the Times closed their Bureau, it's because they went out and spent so much money on that Times Information Bank.

JIM SCOFIELD:

Grace Parch of the Cleveland (Ohio) Plain Dealer?

GRACE PARCH:

Well, at one time at the Plain Dealer there were ten telephone operators, and they handled an answering service. At some time in the past they've been eliminated and left us with one telephone operator supposedly handling over 100 calls a day. When I came to complain to her, she decided to try and solve all these problems. The first thing we did was try to shorten the hours to 11-5. Of course this will eliminate most of the drunk callers. It didn't work very well. Then we decided to charge people to use our service. We limited them to about five minutes of free service, and then, we decided to charge them a minimum of $20.00. (This was for the general public, calling in from the outside.) This was a way of controlling the public, not of making any money. We did add a few dollars to the treasury. This didn't really work very well, so we decided to eliminate the public completely from our library. We do answer letters. We have a recorded message which we started about three weeks ago. We haven't had any criticism from the public and we haven't had any criticism from the main public library. In fact, the main public library has told us that they are thinking of having a recorded message also.

We thought we were going to have quite a bit of criticism but really it didn't end that way at all. You don't get the feedback from the public; the arguing, the comments, the nasty remarks. You don't get the drunks calling all the time. You're able to go about with your own work. It seems to be working out.

Let's face it, no matter how many people you have, you just can't give the service that the public library can. This is the public library's responsibility in the first place. We feel that with the recorded message and allowing people to write in we're able to take care of scholars, teachers and others.

(Question from audience.) What does your recorded message say?

It is a lengthy message, I would say a lot longer than the usual message. It covers about 90% of the calls. Then we do have a direct line in case there is an emergency. For most people there is a recorded message and it covers: back issues, clipping dates, where to write for this information, the public library telephone number

(and refers people to the public library because 80% of our questions were public library questions) and it mentions how to go about getting pictures. It covers about four different main queries.

(Question from audience.) If we write to you can we get a copy of the text of that message?

Yes.

JIM SCOFIELD:

Bob Neswick of the Spokane (Wash.) Spokesman Review?

ROBERT NESWICK:

We have two newspapers, five magazines and we also have the tour program in the library.

Last year we had three tours a week and each took about an hour and a half. All the kids from all of 80-100 miles come in and there's no way to break that out of the library. We've been given the job of handling public service and we're into it in a very big way.

One of our papers has the Newspaper in the Classroom program so they promote the tour situation. It's good public relations; but it's awfully costly and it takes the heart out of your library. We do have three or four outside guides which we hire for the tours. Still I have to do the talking for a half hour or forty-five minutes for each tour.

JIM SCOFIELD:

Are there any specific problems somebody wants solved? After all, you're here among all the champs. Gayle Thompson of the Miami (Fla.) News?

GAYLE THOMPSON:

I have a question for you, Jim. If you don't handle questions from the public, what do you do about the FBI, the IRS and so on? Josephine has gotten around it, but we have not. What do you do?

SCOFIELD:

Well officially, we have a blanket "no" for everybody. However, we've adopted the system from the Philadelphia (Pa.) Enquirer which has an information form they ask all these investigators to fill out. They get their badge number, their superior, etc. and also why they're looking (because one thing they will not allow are fishing expeditions in our files, and I hope none of you allow that). If you allow fishing in the files then you're in real trouble because you're going to get subpoenaed and everything else. For example, when Judge Carswell was up for nomination

and nobody knew it, we knew it. They (FBI) came in and asked for his clips. When we asked why, they said, "Well we can't tell you." I said, "Then you won't see it." They said, "Well OK, he's being considered for the Supreme Court." So within ten minutes we had it and scooped the country. Once you do this once or twice they won't come in anymore. That's it. Now we take a very hard line.

We also had a doctor who was investigated by the Internal Revenue Service once. I said, "How come?" They said, "You know . . ." I said, "OK a tax investigation." Well, we got the scoop on that just to keep it up. You know, income tax cases are pretty secret, you never find out who's who until they take them to court.

We have done something else though that we all should consider. As you know, now they're investigating riots and demonstrations because they're trying to find out who are the participants. What the government would do is come in and ask for our negatives or pictures. We've got an archive. The only pictures we keep on file and the only negatives we keep on file are of those pictures that appear in the paper. Everything else is destroyed. We never want to be in the position of turning someone in (or being a government informer) which is really what they're trying to have us do.

At the same time we tell them, "Sure you can have any pictures that we ran in the paper, if you want to look at our public record." You have to be very careful about that. Lately we've had photographers called in and subpoenaed to testify. Our policy is not to testify generally. However, we had an instance of a reporter who happened to be on the scene of an accident that occured here at the building. This little Volkswagen smashed into a telephone pole, and the trunk popped open. The reporter was just standing there. He looked and saw these bags of something. While the police were rounding up traffic and straightening everything out the reporter went over there and sniffed around a little bit. He called the officer and said, "Marijuana." It turned out that it was. Now this was a fine line -- can this man testify in this case? We took the position that he did this as a public citizen, a knowledgeable public citizen, but nevertheless a public citizen. Therefore he was allowed to testify. So you have to draw the distinction. Does that somewhat answer your question?

SCOFIELD:

What are other policies on this, just to extend this? Lets hear from W. Danforth Hayes of the Worcester (Mass.) Telegram and Gazette.

W. DANFORTH HAYES:

Because of difficulties we've run into in the past years, in cooperating as a library with the forces of law and order, our fixed rule now is anyone (District attorney's office, FBI, IRS, any of these) is turned aside to the office of the managing editor who has the overall surveillance of the library. That way he gets his little sniffer going as to what's cooking and also screens what comes into the library. That takes a load off our shoulders and I think it is a very sensible policy.

We had one situation, some years ago, a highway bridge under construction collapsed and resulted in some deaths. One of my assistants, without my knowing it, but in my name, turned over to the District Attorney's office the original pictures that were run in the paper and a lot of others that weren't. Well, I had one heck of a time getting those pictures back from my good friend, district attorney, Bill Buckley. He kept putting me off. He said the Judge still has them impounded, etc. It was a matter of years before I got those pictures back. No more do they go to any of these lawyers or insurance investigators; they'll have to be screened by the managing editor and a lot of them don't want to be bothered. They say, "Oh well, the hell with it." So that helps us a lot.

SCOFIELD:

Washington I suppose is the most critical city for this, outside of New York. Ann Sausedo of the Washington (D.C.) Star-News, what is your policy?

ANN SAUSEDO:

Nobody's allowed in. We used to get lots of scoops like you did, because the FBI would come in. The Blue sheet meant presidential appointment, the white sheet meant this other and so we'd give them what they wanted. Then we'd hike out to the news room and say, "So and so, and so and so, are being considered." We had lots of screams from reporters, the underground press and what have you; so nobody is allowed in the file room. It's just a flat no.

Mark, does the Washington (D.C.) Post carry the brunt of all this?

MARK HANNAN:

It's closed completely, except we try to do correspondence. It's closed to the government and everyone.

SCOFIELD:

Maurice Lauzon of the New Bedford (Mass.) Standard Times what do you do?

MAURICE LAUZON:

We just instituted a system, and I don't know how it will work. It has to do with the general public coming in for a look-see of our envelopes. We have them sign their name, address, the subject which they're looking for and the date. By this we're trying to eliminate the people going out with our envelopes. It happens once in awhile. The only thing is that this might solve our problem in an unexpected way. I have a feeling that the envelopes that are disappearing certainly aren't taken out by the general public. I feel that they're being taken out by the staff. These are my own suspicions, and I don't know how many others will go along with me.

SCOFIELD:

Ernest Perez of the Houston (Tex.) Chronicle what is your question?

ERNEST PEREZ:

I wanted to know one thing. You said you were closed except to other libraries, like trading service. What about the public calls you get and then half an hour later a university or a public library calls in a question on the same thing.

SCOFIELD:

Well, we don't have a university nearby so we never hear those.

PEREZ:

Well, what kind of a problem is that? They do help you. The public goes to them and they go back to you.

SCOFIELD:

Well, I don't know how much it would happen, I've never gotten any real help from our public library to be honest with you.

PEREZ:

I never have either but from the university I do.

SCOFIELD:

Josephine Johnson of the Louisville (Ky.) Courier-Journal & Times?

JOSEPHINE JOHNSON:

Apparently we set up an arrangement with the public library and they met monthly with all the department heads and the head of the library. They discussed repetitive kinds of problems they actually worked with. The high schools tried to give notification in advance of the term papers. I think that they set up a very cooperative arrangement where the Journal could feel much freer about referring the public to the public library. They would perform service for the public library with more latitude and not have to hassle the problem. We have an informal arrangement with the public library where we help them (they've never helped us) but we throw as many of the public calls there as we can.

In 1970 Barry Bingham, Jr. signed a letter that went out to the news media in the Jefferson County area. That included radio, television, the weekly newspapers and the Louisville magazine, which is a publication of the Chamber of Commerce. News media was defined to include in the restricted terms those who were publishing a serial type publication and by that we don't include the Boards of Education or the various organizations that print inhouse newsletters or publications that are restricted to their own disciplines or membership. This has to be something that is of general consumption, or broadcast generally.

The letter offered a subscription service. The people pay a $25.00 flat subscription fee. What they get for their $25.00 is permission to send an identified representative from their staff who then has access to the news clippings. When they come in they have to present their idenfication card. They're seated at a table and the material is brought to them. They do not have any access directly to the files. We also copy material for them at 50¢ a print plus sales tax. That price is a little high with all the ways and means of cheap duplication of material. We feel that that's good too, because then they're only going to ask for information that they really need.

I frankly had a case of the shakes when the thing was suggested because I had visions of them coming in, in droves. That has not happened. Actually, we started out with eleven subscribers and we are now down to seven (A couple of the radio stations have gone out of business). The only virtue that it has is to give a kind of professional courtesy to the people who are in the same business we're in. To set up a rapport, a friendly feeling toward them and also collect the $25.00 fee to get them in the door.

That's something that might be considered if you want to work a system with a specialized group in your community for better public relations and better service. It helps to keep the reporter on the little newspaper from paying a reporter on your newspaper to wiggle his way into the files without your knowing it.

SCOFIELD:

Homer Martin of the Bergen County (N.J.) Record, do you have a question?

HOMER MARTIN:

Can I ask Jo, is that $25.00 fee a subscription fee or based on an instant charge?

JOHNSON:

It's $25.00 a year; it's an annual fee.

MARTIN:

You say you have about eleven subscribers?

JOHNSON:

We started out with eleven; we have seven active subscribers.

MARTIN:

Any member of that staff or just one designated person?

JOHNSON:

Anybody with a letter from an editor or an identification card. This includes TV stations, radio, weekly and daily newspapers. The

only exception is the Chamber of Commerce which publishes a montly magazine called Louisville.

MARK HANNAN:

We had the same problem, Channel 9 is connected with the Washington (D.C.) Post. They went and talked to our editor and said, "Hey, we don't have any library, can we come in and use yours?" We looked for a way out, or way of charging them. Well, that hasn't happened yet. They have continued to use it. We haven't arrived at any type of price for use. My idea was to charge them a certain amount a month like $300.00 or $400.00 for access to our files. If they want to use it five times or ten times, that's fine but we would just have a monthly service fee. However many times they wanted to make use of it they could.

SCOFIELD:

I agree with that philosophy, charge high, because after all you invested all that money in it. I wouldn't give it to them for $25.00 a year; they could start their own library. Well, you see, now they're talking about regional libraries. Five or six newspapers going together but what you usually wind up with is one library (so outstanding as compared to the other four or five that want to get in on the free deal because there may be a million dollars invested in this one library) that's going to carry the load. Everybody's going to tip in for $1,000.00 a year and even that is nothing.

Clem Vitek of the Baltimore (Md.) Sun, I see you have something to say.

CLEM VITEK:

I may have given some wrong impressions before about my information bureau by not going into it in every detail. We charge high for xerox copies, a buck apiece for a clipping, so not too many people buy more than they need at that price. If we have to make a document from film, we charge them $3.00, which is pretty steep too. We do this deliberately.

We also feel that there are certain people who can't get the information we give them any other way. That's one reason we don't keep university students out who are doing papers. We allow them in within limits and we keep limitations on them. We count the number of clippings that we have and we make damn sure that we get back what we give them.

I can't help but think that a lot of you are fooling yourselves when you say that you cut off this person, you cut off that person, because the calls are going to get it from your editorial staff anyway. You won't even know it. This way I think you'd have a better chance of keeping control. I don't mean to imply that all newspaper reporters are dishonest, but there's more than one way to skin a cat and these guys know most of the ways.

I think in many instances, you're better off, if you do have to know what you're handling, and what you're doing. If you have to, try

to increase your staff to handle it. The other thing is, I would dare say that most of you sitting here today are saying you don't want to give them information, you want to cut off the public, you don't want to do this and your publisher's starting a direct line, action line or whatever the hell it is called. Chances are, five years from now, they're not going to stop publishing that altogether. Chances are that in five years or so the library is going to inherit it some way or other or else they're going to make a very bloody mark in the community. Sure, I think it would be great. I'd love to go home and say let's cut off the Information Bureau. Let me keep those two people though; I sure as hell could use them somewhere else. However, I don't think it would really solve anything. I really think you ought to think about it on more than one level.

FEMALE VOICE:

Clem, can I speak on that? I may have gone over that a little bit, but I don't know how effective it was. I have the executive editor underwriting my opinion on any of this reportorial spying or help. He sends out a note periodically that this is not to be done. If I find anything that can prove that it has been done, it goes right to him.

VITEK:

That's an awful damn hard thing to prove. How can you prove what a man wants something for? That is unless you're standing beside him and you hear him talking to a friend of his on another newspaper.

VOICE:

We can't do it for sure, but it's something that has come into the Information Service, and we've worked with them on it.

SCOFIELD:

Are there any other questions? Helen Everts of the Lancaster (Pa.) Newspapers?

HELEN EVERTS:

I would like to ask, are there any newspapers that are small like me? We have 3 1/2 people and we're open from 7:30 a.m. to 11:30 p.m.. We serve morning, evening and Sunday staffs. There is always this infighting because somebody on the staff of the New Era took a file, kept it and locked it in their desk and someone else came in that night and they wanted it. We have to hassle all the time.

I don't have any clout in the organization. We're just the library and it seems as if we have 75 different bosses. Every time a reporter comes in he says, "You ought to start a file on this. Why the hell don't you have that?"

So has anybody ever had any of this kind of thing -- files staying out? They come in and they just take it out.

MALE VOICE:

Helen, here's what to do. Number one, you want to get yourself underneath the highest man in your organization that you possibly can. If you can report directly to the president of your paper that would be fine. This gives you some clout. If you're going to make a complaint; make a complaint to somebody that's worthwhile. The other thing that might help is that for years we have had a rule, and we stick to it, that they must return each clipping and other materials (pictures are handled a little differently because they're a different kind of animal) by the end of the work day. That's the rule and they ignore it.

Well, we enforce it by calling them once and then calling them twice. The second time we report it right to their supervisor. If he doesn't do anything about it, he gets reported to his supervisor. If I get that far and don't get anywhere, I'll go right upstairs and say, "What the hell do you want me to run, a library or some kind of babysitting service?" Really that's the only thing you can do. There isn't any other way or else you can go on and say, "Well, do you want to let them take them home or do you want them to lose the clippings?" There are probably other ways to handle this, but this is the only way I can think of off hand.